MOBILITY

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BRENDAN BYRNE, Governor | APRIL 1981 | LOUIS J. GAMBACCINI, Commissioner

Spring ushers in highway projects

The onset of spring weather saw $178 million in construction, repair, rehabilitation and safety improvement projects start up statewide.

Of the total, $112 million will come from federal funds, $28 million from the Department's state capital budget monies and $38 million from the 1979 Transportation Bond Issue.

Major construction projects include:

* The $28 million completion of **Interstate Route 195** through Allaire State Park, Howell Township, Monmouth County.

* The **Route 18** "missing link" between Hamilton Street and the Raritan River Bridge in New Brunswick. The $27 million regrading, repaving and construction project includes two lanes with a shoulder in each direction, bikeways, connecting ramps to local streets and a noise attenuating deck over Route 18. The deck provides a park with recreation facilities.

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HOVs move 3,000 daily

Ridesharing is catching on among Garden State Parkway commuters. More than 3,000 high occupancy vehicles (HOVs) are now using the "Easy Street" HOV lanes everyday.

Nearly 13% of the people using the Parkway during peak hours are riding in HOVs and using the lane which is reserved for vehicles carrying three or more people during morning and evening rush hours. This represents a substantial increase in carpoolers since the new lanes opened last November.

During the first weeks of operation in November and December, an average of 560 HOVs used the lanes

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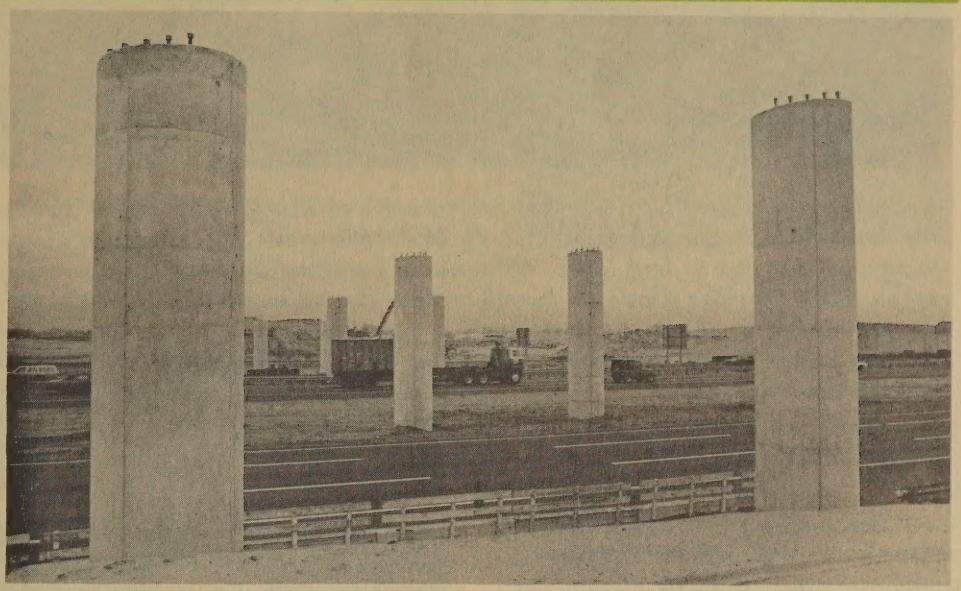

The new Exit 13A ramp on the New Jersey Turnpike in Elizabeth, a joint venture of NJDOT, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Turnpike Authority, is under construction.

Budget prospects look dim

Transportation Commissioner Louis J. Gambaccini testified in March before the Joint Legislative Appropriations Committee on the Department of Transportation fiscal 1982 recommended budget of $271.9 million, a 3.2% increase over the current year.

The Commissioner said that because of continuing double digit inflation, the recommended budget will provide for less service, higher transit fares, longer delays in projects and worse road and bridge conditions.

He said that while public demands are constantly rising for more and better transportation, funds for transportation are shrinking. He noted that transportation represented 28% of the state budget, including federal aid, in 1961, but will represent only 5% of the State budget, including federal aid, in fiscal 1982.

The Department has actively pursued management improvements and other sources of funding to reduce the impact of limited budgets, but without a stable source of funding, the decline in New Jersey's transportation system will continue. It will face the very real prospect of closing down bridges and rail lines.

The Commissioner focused on major budget impacts on NJ TRANSIT, highway maintenance and state aid.

NJ TRANSIT staff has recommended 50% fare increases on bus and rail and some service cuts in July and an additional 30-40% rail fare increase and more service cuts by January 1982 to close an $80 million transit operating budget deficit.

The proposed rail increases are higher because rail commuters now pay a lower percent of the cost of their travel than do bus commuters (rail now 1/3 of cost, bus now 2/3 of cost). Public hearings on the proposal will be conducted in 15 locations around the State beginning next month.

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The Wood Avenue railroad bridge project at Route 27 in Woodbridge is nearing the final phase. Begun in August 1979, the $9.1 million project will see the roadway widened from two to four lanes. An innovative method of construction is being employed to minimize impact on the main line of the Northeast Rail Corridor which crosses above. A new support structure is being constructed along side of the existing bridge. When completed it will be rolled into place and the old masonry will then be removed.

Dedesignation is accepted for I-95 spur

Federal approval of the dedesignation of the I-95 spur, a proposed eight-mile roadway that would have run from Route 287 in South Plainfield to Franklin Township, is the third such dedesignation in the last two years.

Dedesignation removes the roadway from the national Interstate Highway System and makes New Jersey eligible to use the $145 million in construction money for other road and public transit improvements in the region.

This action was taken after extensive Department analysis demonstrated that the spur was not essential to the interstate system.

Highway starts *(continued from page one)*

* Construction is scheduled to start this year on the segment of **Route 23** between Interstate Route 80 and New Street in Wayne Township, Passaic County, at a cost of $30 million.

* **Route 17** will be resurfaced and shoulders reconstructed between the area north of Paramus Road, Ridgewood, and south of Lake Street in Upper Saddle River, totalling $3.4 million.

* Safety improvements to **Route 1 & 9** in Kearney and Jersey City will include the installation of barrier curbing, impact attenuators and guide rails between the Passaic River Bridge and Route 440.

* Two ramps on **Route 1** in the downtown Trenton area will be constructed to permit direct access to the Justice Complex and improve access to the downtown area. The $2.1 million project will be funded completely with bond monies.

* **Route 9**, a four-lane facility, in Middlesex County will be widened to three lanes in each direction from the Garden State Parkway south to Sayreville Borough and Old Bridge Township.

* **Route 38**, Mount Holly, Lumberton Township in Burlington County, will be resurfaced between Madison Avenue and Pine Street. The project will cost about $1.5 million.

* 10.2 miles on **Interstates 287** and **95** where interchanges will be improved and guiderails installed at a cost of $1.5 million.

* A high-speed ramp interchange project will be continued under Interstate **Route 295** and the New Jersey Turnpike in Cherry Hill and Lawnside, Camden County. The $24 million project will relieve local traffic and create improved access to the new Woodcrest Station and parking lot.

Bridges

There are 17 bridge construction, four culvert and 66 overhead sign installation projects scheduled for this spring. One is the Route 17 bridge over Route 4 in Paramus which will be widened to three lanes northbound and safety improvements installed. This will reduce congestion and relieve conflicts between Route 17 northbound traffic and the ramp traffic from Route 4 eastbound.

Abutments for a new bridge will be constructed on Route 88 over the Inland Waterway in Point Pleasant Borough, Ocean County. Scheduled for completion in 1983, the new structure will replace an existing lift bridge and is the first part of a three-stage project which will total about $15 million upon completion.

The Department has also scheduled local aid projects which are funded by federal and/or state monies with Bond Issue funds. They include:

* The $1.5 million widening of Market Street in the city of Trenton.

* The Broadway Bridge in Point Pleasant Beach Borough, Ocean County, will be reconstructed. The structure connects Route 35 to the shore.

Bond dollars committed

As of March 1, a total of $137 million has been committed to more than 300 projects from the 1979 Transportation Bond Issue.

This represents 47% of the amount appropriated by the State Legislature from the Bond Issue. The Bond Issue commitment breakdown is as follows: state highways, $40 million; state aid, $52 million; and public transportation, $45 million.

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FHWA approves environmental studies

Commissioner Louis J. Gambaccini has announced Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval of the final Environmental Impact Statements for a section of I-78 and the project known as the "Trenton Complex", an I-95 spur.

The proposed 5.5 mile "missing link" of I-78 between Plainfield Avenue in Berkeley Heights and Baltusrol Road in Springfield will relieve congestion on Route 22. To preserve the natural beauty of the Watchung Reservation, a 2,000 acre recreation area, a segment of the road has been designed below ground level and covered at three points. The $100 million project should result in a savings of time and operating cost of $47 million annually, including a 17 million gallon reduction in gasoline due to the reduced fuel costs.

The Trenton Complex consists of constructing additions to Routes I-195, I-295 and 29 and the new Route 129. Construction costs are estimated to be $253 million. When completed, the resulting roadway capacities will aid travel and relieve congestion on local roads while providing a continuous route between Trenton and other areas in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

FHWA approval clears the way for final design public hearings with construction to begin in approximately one year.

Woodcrest Station, Cherry Hill

NJDOT gives seniors a ride

Mercer County senior citizens board a van provided by the Department's Office of Special Programs using federal and state funds in a 80-20 percent ratio. 234 specially equipped vehicles have already been distributed and 67 additional are on order.

Prize winner

The Department has received a third place award in the Federal Highway Administration's 1980 "Excellence in the Design of Highway Facilities" Program for its design of the Woodcrest Station Park-and-Ride facility in Cherry Hill, Camden County. The award was in the "Intermodal Facilities" category that includes park and ride lots, transit malls, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Entries were judged on design, signing, furnishings and landscaping.

The Woodcrest Station Park-and-Ride, which opened on September 1, 1979, is highlighted by extensive landscaping, including trees, shrubs, and brick walkways that compliment the aesthetic beauty of the area. The facility can accommodate 2,650 cars and also has bus access.

Budget prospects look dim *(continued from page one)*

Limited maintenance funds require elimination of:

* litter pickups unless the litter is causing an identifiable health or safety problem
* shrub, tree and grass maintenance such as pruning, fertilizing
* ditch and inlet cleaning
* contact road sweeping and all hand sweeping
* sign cleaning
* guiderail painting
* private contractor snow removal
* repairs to snow fences and chain link fences

Funds available will be used for such safety and operations related maintenance as:

* bridge joint sealing and deck repairs
* permanent pavement patching, pouring joints, and road drainage improvements
* traffic line painting
* regulatory, warning and other essential directional signs
* guiderail upgrading
* herbicide application to prevent excessive weed growth

A $10 million budget cut in State Aid will result in lack of state match necessary to draw down $57 million federal funds available for eligible local road improvements in fiscal year 1982. These funds together with Bond Issue funds were planned to match, for the first time in years, a backlog of federal funds allocated to New Jersey.

Copies of Commissioner Gambaccini's testimony are available by calling 609-292-7212 or 609-292-3105.

Canal house serves a new era

The lock tender's house adjacent to the Delaware and Raritan Canal is in the path of the Route 18 Freeway construction. Plans are to relocate it to the Outlet Lock in Boyd Park, restore it and recycle it as an interpretive center on the canal for the public.

HOVs move 3,000

(continued from page one)

northbound every morning. Figures gathered in February show an average of 860 HOVs using the northbound lanes from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. The increased usage is especially significant since traditionally car and vanpooling tends to decline during the cold winter months.

The HOV lanes, located on the 12 miles of state-owned Parkway between Exits 129 and 140, are reserved for HOVs from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. The program is designed to provide a time-saving incentive for ridesharing to save gasoline and maintain and expand the capacity of this busy stretch of the Parkway. If no effort is made to encourage ridesharing, projections indicate that this section of the road will be over capacity by 1983-84, with mostly single occupant vehicles.

In addition to operating the lanes, DOT's Office of Ridesharing is working with several hundred large employers in the HOV lane area.

A presentation, including a color/sound film about "Easy Street," is available from NJDOT's Speakers Bureau. To schedule a program about the HOV lanes for your organization or group, call 609-292-9081.

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Schuman is new liaison

Elaine J. Schuman is Commissioner Louis J. Gambaccini's new executive assistant for intergovernmental liaison. She replaces Amy Rosen, who now heads NJDOT's Public Transportation Services.

The Princeton resident comes to NJDOT after seven years as Mercer County's Director of Consumer Affairs, which she researched and set up. In this position, Schuman built up a reputation as an excellent mediator with the business community and an active lobbyist on consumer's legislation. She served as secretary of the National Association of Consumer Affairs Administrators and president of the County and Municipal Consumer Agencies, Inc.

Her other experience is as varied as coordinating a New Jersey Presidential campaign and directing a large corps of volunteers for Princeton University's English-in-Action program for foreign students.

Schuman, who considers public service her profession, makes time to serve on advisory boards including the American Red Cross,

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